



AREC 360: THE POVERTY & DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONS*

Spring Semester 2021
Monday & Wednesday
11:00 AM - 12:15 PM
McClelland Park, Room 103

Instructor

Prof. Jeffrey Michler

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Office Hours: Monday & Wednesday, 3:30 - 4:30 PM

Teaching Assistant

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Tuesday & Thursday, 1:00 - 2:00 PM

Course Description: Nearly one billion people live on \$2.00 or less per day. This course is designed to introduce students to the causes, constraints, contexts, and potential solutions associated with poverty and economic development. Focus is placed on the application of microeconomic theory and statistical analysis to understand causes of poverty and critically evaluate poverty alleviation policies in low income countries.

Prerequisite: Students must have (1) junior or senior standing and (2) completed ECON 200 or the equivalent.

Credit Hours: 3

Texts (Required):

- Taylor, J. Edward and Lybbert, Travis J. 2020. *Essentials of Development Economics, 3rd Edition*. Oakland: University of California Press.
- Banerjee, Abhijit V. and Duflo, Esther. 2011. *Poor Economics: A Radical Rethinking of the Way to Fight Global Poverty*. New York: Public Affairs.

Course Objectives:

1. Build an appreciation for the complex nature of poverty and development in developing countries.
2. Introduce students to the key theories of economic development and the empirical evidence that supports or challenges these theories.
3. Understand the challenges to causal identification and the methods economists use to address these challenges.
4. Provide tools to critically analyze economic development strategies, programs, and projects in low income countries.
5. Equip students to work for an international non-governmental organization (NGO) or government agency in relief and development.

*Information contained in the course syllabus, other than the grade and absence policy, may be subject to change with advance notice, as deemed appropriate by the instructor.

Expected Learning Outcomes: At the completion of this course, students should be able to:

1. Describe key challenges faced by individuals, households, and communities living in less developed countries.
2. Select and describe the appropriate theoretical models and empirical research methods to answer key development questions.
3. Explain how economists identify causal effects using theory and data.
4. Analyze data to address policy relevant research questions.
5. Develop communication and collaboration skills for future coursework.

Course Structure: The course will roughly follow the chapters listed in Taylor and Lybbert (from now on *TL*). A more detailed schedule attached at the end of this syllabus and on D2L indicates what material will be covered and what readings you should complete before each class meeting. You should read the suggested material before coming to class to obtain a general background of the upcoming lecture(s). You are responsible for all material contained in the readings even if the material is not cover in class. Course material, outside of the books, will be posted on D2L and it is your responsibility to obtain this material and any new material posted throughout the course.

Grading System: Incentives are a big part of economics. As an economist, I hope I have created a grading scheme that provides incentives for you to succeed: come to class, be active in a study group, work on the problem sets, keep current with the material, find ways to understand the material that works for you, and think creatively about economics.

Your course grade will be based on the following:

Exercise	Weight of Grade	Main course objectives targeted by exercise
Research Proposal	40%	Economics skills, job applicability, critical thinking, reflective thinking
Problem Sets	40%	Economic skills, analysis, job applicability (e.g., data analysis, Excel)
Book Club	10%	Understanding, critical thinking, analysis, reflective thinking
Quizzes	10%	Primary focus on understanding, economics skills, critical thinking

Grading Scale: The grading scheme will be as follows (out of 100):

A: 90-100, B: 80-89, C: 70-79, D: 60-69, E: 0-59.

Problem Sets: Since development economics relies heavily on empirical analysis, you will complete four problem sets during the semester, each of which incorporates basic data handling and data analysis. The problem sets will require the use of Microsoft Excel or Google Sheets. Note that [Microsoft Office 365](#) (which includes Excel) is free to all UA students as is [G Suite](#), which includes Google Sheets. When turning in the solutions to problem sets, you must upload both a typed copy of your answers and your Excel of Sheet document to D2L. Failure to submit all items will result in a reduction of 5% in your grade for that problem set. *Problem sets are always due at 11:59 PM on the day that they are due.*

Learning to solve a problem on your own can be very valuable but I also believe that students can learn from each other. Therefore, I leave it up to you the students to determine if you want to complete the problem sets on your own or in a group. If you choose to complete a problem set(s) on your own, the work you turn in must reflect your independent effort as per the University's Code of Academic Integrity (see page 5 below). If you choose to complete the problem set(s) in a group, then your group will turn in a single set of solutions and you will all share the same grade. Groups cannot exceed 5 students. You can reform your group with each problem set or stay with the same group. You are free to work in a group on some problem sets and work as an individual on other problem sets.

Book Club: Development economics is primarily concerned with applying theory to practical problems in order to materially improve the lives of the poor. As such, problems in economic development are often in the news. To help you engage in applying the economic concepts taught in lecture to contemporary issues in the development sector we will be reading and discussing the book by recent Nobel Laureates Banerjee and Duflo (from now on *BD*).

To facilitate discussion of the readings from *BD*, you will be assigned to a Book Club of around 15 members. Your Book Club discussion will occur on a [Slack channel](#) that I have set-up and that will be monitored by me and the TA. Readings in *BD* are due about once a week. In each week that a reading is assigned (see course outline below) you will need to post at least four comments about that reading. At minimum, one comment needs to be original while three other comments need to be responding to the comments of other members in your Book Club. Your grade will be determined by both the quantity and quality of your comments.

Research Proposal: A key component of education at a research university is learning how to engage with existing research and how to develop your own research skills. This assignment is designed to expose you to current research on an economic development issue and allow you to creatively apply the tools you learn in class to a real world problem that is of interest to you. Because applied economic research is primarily collaborative, this assignment will be done in research groups that I will help direct you to form.

Developing the research proposal will take the entire semester. To help you and your group stay on target, I have developed a number of intermediate assignments that will be due throughout the term.

1. *Define Research Topic.* You will need to define a research topic or question that you find interesting. There will be a questionnaire in the form of a “quiz” on D2L where you will need to write out your topic or question in 1-2 sentences. You must submit your topic via D2L by 11:59 PM on 27 January.
2. *Set Research Group.* Based on everyone’s research topic I will work to place you in a group with students who share a similar interest. I will propose groups and then you can reorganize your groups as you see fit. Once you have set your group, you will need to set up a shared Google Drive folder for the research proposal and submit the names of group members and the link to the shared folder via D2L by 11:59 PM on 3 February.
3. *Research Justification.* Your group will need to write a justification for your chosen topic. The justification should state why the problem is interesting and important (the “so what?” question), should be one page, and is due at 11:59 PM on 17 February.
4. *Bibliography.* You will need to schedule a meeting with one of the librarians at the [UA Library](#) to develop a bibliography. The bibliography must be [correctly formatted in APA, 7th edition](#), and list at least 10 citations of academic research papers that are relevant to your research topic. It is due at 11:59 PM on 3 March.
5. *Literature Review.* You will need to write a literature review that summarizes the existing research on your topic and demonstrates your comprehension of the methods used by others to address your research question. The literature review should not exceed five pages and is due at 11:59 PM on 24 March.
6. *Research Design.* The research design is the central element of the research proposal. Based on your literature review and what you have learned in class, you will need to clearly and carefully define how you propose to answer your research question. The proposed design is hypothetical (I do not expect you to carry it out) while still being practicable (the proposed method is possible, feasible, and appropriate). The research design should not exceed 10 pages and is due at 11:59 PM on 5 April.
7. *Research Proposal for Review.* The penultimate stage of the research proposal is to put everything together into a single document, adding an introduction, background, preliminary suppositions, and a conclusion. The document, excluding title page, bibliography, tables and figures, should not exceed 20 pages and is due at 11:59 PM on 19 April.
8. *Final Research Proposal.* We will review your proposals and provide you with feedback. You will need to revise your proposal to incorporate this feedback and the submit the final proposal by 11:59 PM on 5 May.

All research project work will need to be conducted in G Suite and you must provide access to the documents and file to the instructors and TA. With the exception of item 1 and 2, every intermediate assignment must be typed (double spaced, Times New Roman, with 1-inch margins and 12-pt font). Assignments must be submitted to D2L by 11:59

PM on the date due. Failure to adhere to either the formatting or due date on each intermediate assignment will result in a reduction of 5% in the final grade on your research proposal. Note that these deductions accumulate. While you will develop the research proposal as group, group members will be graded individually based on their level of contribution to the overall group effort.

Quizzes: There will be periodic quizzes on D2L throughout the semester. The quizzes are designed as study tools to help you focus on and recall what I think are the most important elements from each topic we discuss. Typically, there will be one quiz per lecture. There are no exams in this class.

A Road Map for Success in AREC 360:

1. Come to class and pay attention.
2. Prior to lecture, read the relevant textbook chapters and download or print the lecture slides.
3. Form a study group, meet regularly and participate actively.
4. Start work on the problem sets early and ask questions of me before the due date.
5. Use the web to actively seek out other economics sources that fit your learning style and help you better understand the material.
6. Communicate with your classmates, your TA, and myself.

Requests for incomplete (I) or withdrawal (W): Requests must be made in accordance with University policies, which are available at <http://catalog.arizona.edu/policy/grades-and-grading-system>.

Grade Dispute: If the student believes there has been a mistake in the posted grade on D2L, or the final grade in the class, the student must notify the Dr. Michler no later than one week after the posting of the grade. All grades after the one-week window are final.

Absence and Class Participation Policy: Consult the UA's policy concerning Class Attendance, Participation, and Administrative Drops: <http://catalog.arizona.edu/policy/class-attendance-participation-and-administrative-drop>.

The UA policy regarding absences for any sincerely held religious belief, observance or practice will be accommodated where reasonable, <http://policy.arizona.edu/human-resources/religious-accommodation-policy>.

Absences pre-approved by the UA Dean of Students (or Dean Designee) will be honored. See: <https://deanofstudents.arizona.edu/absences>.

Participating in the course and attending lectures and other course events are vital to the learning process. As such, attendance is required at all lectures. Students who miss class due to illness or emergency are required to bring documentation from their health-care provider or other relevant, professional third parties. Failure to submit third-party documentation will result in unexcused absences.

Classroom Behavior Policy: To foster a positive learning environment, students and instructors have a shared responsibility. We want a safe, welcoming, and inclusive environment where all of us feel comfortable with each other and where we can challenge ourselves to succeed. To that end, our focus is on the tasks at hand and not on extraneous activities (e.g., texting, chatting, reading a website, making phone calls, web surfing, etc.).

Lauren's Promise: I will listen and believe you if someone is threatening you.

Lauren McCluskey, a 21-year-old honors student athlete, was murdered on 22 October 2018, by a man she briefly dated on the University of Utah campus. We must all take actions to ensure that this never happens again.

If you are in immediate danger, call 911.

If you are experiencing sexual assault, domestic violence, and stalking, please report it to me and I will connect you to resources or call the National Alternatives to Violence at 877-334-2887 (24-hour crisis hotline).

Any form of sexual harassment or violence will not be excused or tolerated at the University of Arizona. The UA Threatening Behavior by Students Policy prohibits threats of physical harm to any member of the University community, including to oneself. See <http://policy.arizona.edu/education-and-student-affairs/threatening-behavior-students>.

Resources for Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault, and Stalking:

- National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-SAFE and <https://www.thehotline.org/help/>
- RAINN (Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network): 1-800-656-HOPE (4673) and <https://www.rainn.org/>
- Victim Connect Resource Center: 1-855-484-2846 and <https://victimconnect.org/>
- Love is Respect – National Dating Abuse Hotline: call 1 (866) 331- 9474 or text 22522
- Anti-Violence Project Hotline: 212-714-1141 and <https://avp.org/get-help/>

Accessibility and Accommodations: At the University of Arizona we strive to make learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience physical or academic barriers based on disability or pregnancy, you are welcome to let me know so that we can discuss options. You are also encouraged to contact Disability Resources (520-621-3268) to explore reasonable accommodation.

Please be aware that the accessible table and chairs in this room should remain available for students who find that standard classroom seating is not usable.

Code of Academic Integrity: Students are encouraged to share intellectual views and discuss freely the principles and applications of course materials. However, graded work/exercises must be the product of independent effort unless otherwise instructed. Students are expected to adhere to the UA Code of Academic Integrity as described in the UA General Catalog. See: <https://deanofstudents.arizona.edu/policies/code-academic-integrity>.

The University Libraries have some excellent tips for avoiding plagiarism, available at <http://new.library.arizona.edu/research/citing/plagiarism>.

Selling class notes and/or other course materials to other students or to a third party for resale is not permitted without the instructor's express written consent. Violations to this and other course rules are subject to the Code of Academic Integrity and may result in course sanctions. Additionally, students who use D2L or UA e-mail to sell or buy these copyrighted materials are subject to Code of Conduct Violations for misuse of student e-mail addresses. This conduct may also constitute copyright infringement.

UA Nondiscrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy: The University is committed to creating and maintaining an environment free of discrimination; see <http://policy.arizona.edu/human-resources/nondiscrimination-and-anti-harassment-policy>.

Our classroom is a place where everyone is encouraged to express well-formed opinions and their reasons for those opinions. We also want to create a tolerant and open environment where such opinions can be expressed without resorting to bullying or discrimination of others.

Course Outline: The weekly coverage might change as it depends on the progress of the class. However, you must keep up with the reading assignments.

Date	Topic	Readings	Evaluations
13-Jan	What Development Economics is All About		
18-Jan	No Class: Martin Luther King, Jr. Day		
20-Jan	What Development Economics is All About	<i>TL</i> Ch. 1	
25-Jan		<i>TL</i> Ch. 2	
27-Jan	What Works and What Doesn't	<i>BD</i> Ch. 1	Define Research Topic
1-Feb			
3-Feb		<i>BD</i> Ch. 2	Set Research Group
8-Feb	Income	<i>TL</i> Ch. 3	
10-Feb		<i>BD</i> Ch. 3	
15-Feb	Poverty	<i>TL</i> Ch. 4	
17-Feb		<i>BD</i> Ch. 4	Research Justification
22-Feb	Inequality	<i>TL</i> Ch. 5	
24-Feb			
1-Mar	Human Development	<i>TL</i> Ch. 6	Problem Set 1
3-Mar		<i>BD</i> Ch. 5	Bibliography
8-Mar	Growth	<i>TL</i> Ch. 7	
10-Mar	No Class: Reading Day		
15-Mar	Institutions	<i>TL</i> Ch. 8	
17-Mar		<i>BD</i> Ch. 6	
22-Mar	Agriculture	<i>TL</i> Ch. 9	Problem Set 2
24-Mar		<i>BD</i> Ch. 7	Literature Review
29-Mar			
31-Mar		<i>BD</i> Ch. 8	
5-Apr	Structural Transformation	<i>TL</i> Ch. 10	Research Design
7-Apr		<i>BD</i> Ch. 9	
12-Apr	Information and Markets	<i>TL</i> Ch. 11	Problem Set 3
14-Apr		<i>BD</i> Ch. 10	
19-Apr			Research Proposal for Review
21-Apr	No Class: Reading Day		
26-Apr	International Trade and Globalization	<i>TL</i> Ch. 13	
28-Apr			
3-May	Finance	<i>TL</i> Ch. 12	Problem Set 4
5-May			Final Research Proposal